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WASHINGTON — Today, Sens. Tom Carper and Chris Coons, and Rep. John Carney (all D-Del.) hailed the U.S. Department of Transportation announcement that nearly \$800 million in high-speed rail funding will be awarded to the Northeast Corridor.

The funds will be used to upgrade track speeds, improve performance and increase passenger capacity. In addition, a “Buy America” requirement will ensure that the improvements are made by U.S. workers and companies. The project should stimulate employment in the construction trades industry in the Mid-Atlantic, one of the hardest hit industries from the recession.

“The Northeast Corridor is a proven success that has greatly benefitted our regional economy,” said Sen. Carper. “Sec. LaHood’s decision to redirect a significant portion of Florida’s rejected high-speed rail funds to the Northeast Corridor where the money is wanted and needed is a smart infrastructure investment that will help create jobs and further grow the economy. It will also help ease congestion on our already crowded roads and highways, and reduce harmful air pollution that is detrimental to public health and the environment. As Delawareans and Americans increasingly rely on passenger rail for their travel needs, the Northeast Corridor has a unique opportunity to serve as a national model for high-speed rail transportation in America. I’d like to thank Sec. LaHood and the Obama Administration for working with the Delaware Delegation to support and improve high-speed rail in the Northeast.”

“When Governor Scott declined to accept his state’s share of these federal funds, we said we wanted to make Florida’s loss Delaware’s gain, and that’s exactly what we did,” Senator Coons said. “The Department of Transportation made the right call in allocating the largest share of Florida’s unused high-speed rail funds to the Northeast Corridor. When we met with Secretary LaHood in March, I underscored the value of Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor as a critical artery for not only Delaware’s economy, but for the country’s. It made sense to invest that money where it could do the most good, and there is no doubt that the Northeast Corridor was that place.”

“High-speed rail is a crucial component in America’s quest to win the future,” said Rep. Carney. “Upgrading the rail infrastructure in the most-heavily traveled corridor of the country will create thousands of jobs, alleviate congestion on our roads, and support the U.S. manufacturing industry. I’m pleased that the funding includes a “Buy America” provision, which underscores the importance of ‘Making It In America,’ an agenda I’m working to advance in the House.”

The \$795 million was re-directed from \$2.4 billion in high-speed rail funding rejected by the State of Florida. According to the Department of Transportation, there were 24 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Amtrak, vying for the funding. Other regions receiving funding include California and the Midwest.

Earlier this year, the Delaware Delegation urged Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to re-direct the rejected Florida funding to the Northeast Corridor. In a letter signed by 37 other representatives, Rep. Carney wrote that “the Northeast Corridor is the strongest candidate for high-speed rail investments in this country.” Sens. Carper and Coons wrote that “although the Northeast Corridor has the only operating high-speed train in the country, the Corridor has received less than two percent of the \$10.5 billion provided by Congress for the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program to date.” Sens. Carper and Coons also met with Secretary LaHood in March to request the funding for the Northeast Corridor.

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